

NEWS / PROFESSION

Cornell and Chiropractic Multidisciplinary Center Collaborate on Research

WATER-ONLY FASTING FOR TREATMENT OF HYPERTENSION

Editorial Staff

In the early 1980s, Western States Chiropractic College graduate Alan Goldhamer traveled to Australia to complete a residency program at the Arcadia Health Center, an osteopathic hospital specializing in the supervision of "water-only" fasting for the treatment of chronic diseases.

After returning to the United States, Dr. Goldhamer and his wife, Jennifer Marano, DC, founded the Center for Chiropractic and Conservative Therapy in Penngrove, California, today known as the TrueNorth Health Center. Dr. Goldhamer is the director of the center's residential health care program, a 22-bed inpatient facility with a staff of 25, including five chiropractors, two medical doctors, a clinical psychologist and other allied health professionals.

The center's chief interest is in alternatives to drug therapy for hypertension and diabetes, and has supervised the care of over 4,000 patients at its residential health care program.

Each year in the U.S., 500,000 people die of stroke, and hypertension is the major cause.^{1,2} The foundation of the center's program is to safely lower or normalize patients' blood pressure. The approach is twofold: a supervised "water-only" fasting regimen, followed by shifting patients' eating habits to a low-fat, low-sodium vegan diet.

In the early 1990s, researchers from Cornell University, Professor T. Colin Campbell and Dr. Banoo Parpia, became interested in the clinical results being reported by the center. Dr. Goldhamer wondered if the center's chiropractic clinicians and chiropractic in-patient facility, working in conjunction with these esteemed researchers from Cornell, could publish credible scientific research from the center's clinical records. Could such research give the center the credibility to make its treatments a medical benefit to thousands of patients?

Professor Campbell had become familiar with the power of a vegetarian diet, as co-author of the "China study," a massive epidemiological research project on human nutrition. Dr. Parpia was

skeptical of chiropractors, or anyone else, treating high blood pressure with water-only fasting and a vegan diet - until she saw the data.

The Cornell researchers analyzed the data of 174 patients who had been admitted to the center for inpatient care for hypertension over a period of 12 years. All of the patients had at least a systolic BP of 140 mm Hg, and a diastolic BP of at least 90 mm Hg. The treatment consisted of three stages:

1. a short, prefasting period (two to three days on fruits and vegetables);
2. a supervised water-only fast (10 to 11 days);
3. six to seven days on a low-fat, low-sodium vegan diet.

Study Results

The average reduction in blood pressure was 37/13 mm Hg. The greatest reduction was seen in patients classified with stage III hypertension, those with blood pressures greater than 180/110. The stage III patients had an average reduction of 60/17 after treatment.

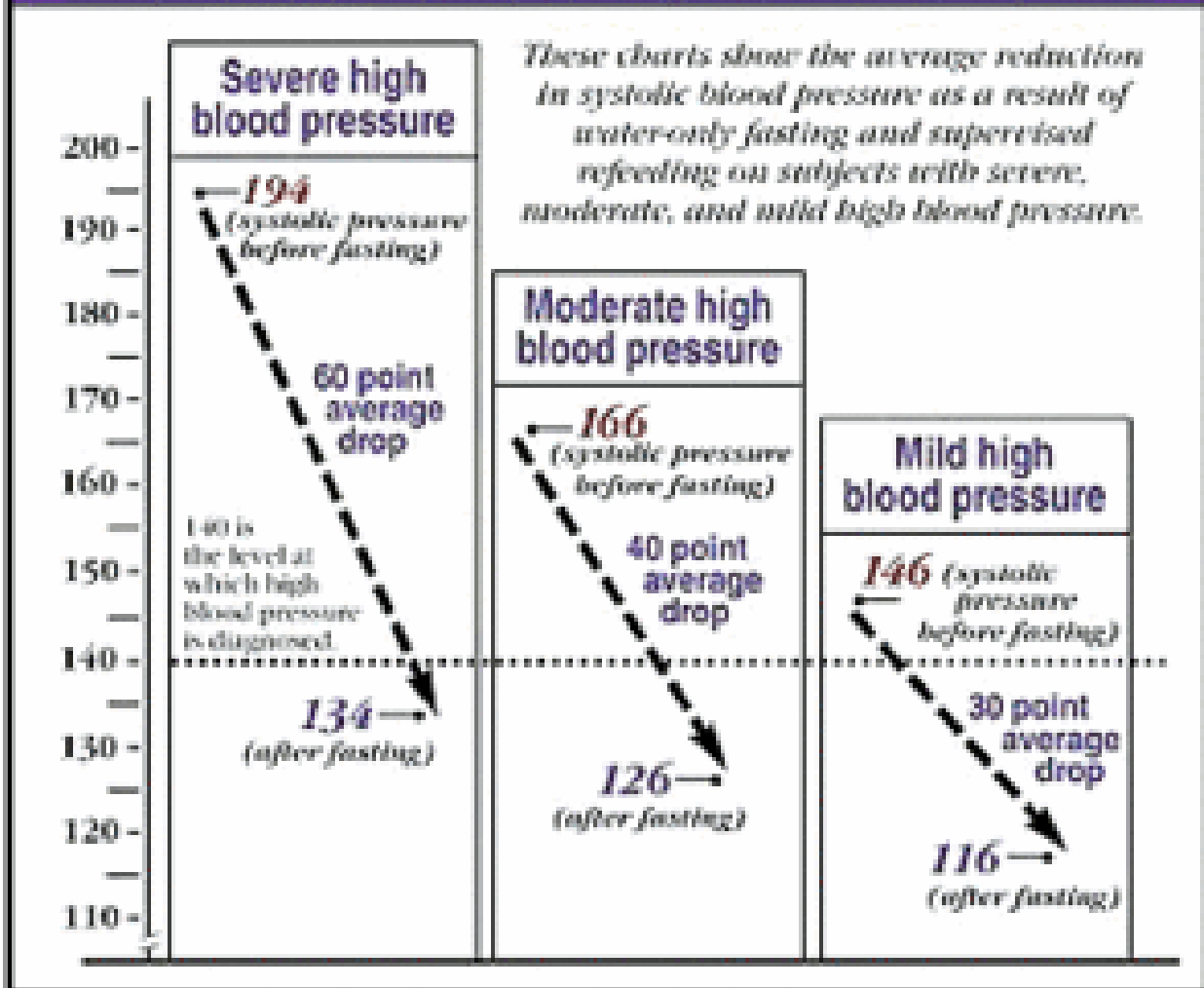
Of the patients who were already on hypertension medication before the treatment (6.3 percent), all were successful in dropping the drug therapy.

The researchers concluded: "Medically supervised water-only fasting appears to be a safe and effective means of normalizing blood pressure, and may assist in motivating health-promoting diet and lifestyle changes."

The results of this study ("Medically Supervised Water-Only Fasting in the Treatment of Hypertension") were published in the June 2001 issue of *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics (JMPT)*. A second study, "Medically Supervised Water-Only Fasting in the Treatment of Borderline Hypertension" is currently under review.

Based in part on the success of this first study, Dr. Goldhamer reports that the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) has awarded a three-year contract to the center. This contract makes participation in the center's program for the treatment of diabetes, or high blood pressure, a fully covered medical benefit, now available to tens of thousands of union members (retired and active) and their spouses.

Effect of fasting on reducing systolic blood pressure of various severities



"Prior to the recent labor union contract, third-party reimbursement was severely limited," explained Dr. Goldhamer. "The California Medical Board has challenged the medical doctors affiliated with the center over their recommendation of therapeutic fasting," he added. "Meeting state and local regulations presents an ongoing challenge."

Dr. Goldhamer acknowledged support for the center's work and research from individuals and organizations such as California Chiropractic Association President Bob Dubin, Dana Lawrence, *JMPT* editor, and the National Chiropractic Mutual Insurance Company.

TrueNorth is currently conducting a prospective study, which will include random assignment, and a programmed long-term follow-up. This research is designed to evaluate the clinical and cost-of-care outcomes for high-risk, high-medical-cost patients.

The center is constructing a new 48-bed alternative health care facility on land owned by Rohnert Park, California. This new structure will allow for the expansion of the center's internship program in which chiropractors, doctors of medicine, osteopathy and naturopathy can undergo training in

the use of water-only fasting, and diet and lifestyle modification in the treatment of chronic disease. Doctors are also given the opportunity to participate in the ongoing clinical research.

"Thanks to an endowment from one of the center's generous benefactors, there is no cost to the doctor for this training program, and room and board is provided during its six-month-long residency program," explained Dr. Goldhamer.

More information on the center's programs and research, including reprints of its recent studies, can be found at www.healthpromoting.com, or by contacting Dr. Alan Goldhamer at dracg@att.net or 707-586-5555.

References

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2. Taylor TN, et al. Lifetime cost of stroke in the United States. *Stroke* 1996;27:1459-66.
3. Goldhamer A, Lisle D, Parpia B, Anderson S, Campbell TC. Medically supervised water-only fasting in the treatment of hypertension. *JMPT* 2001;24:335-9.

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